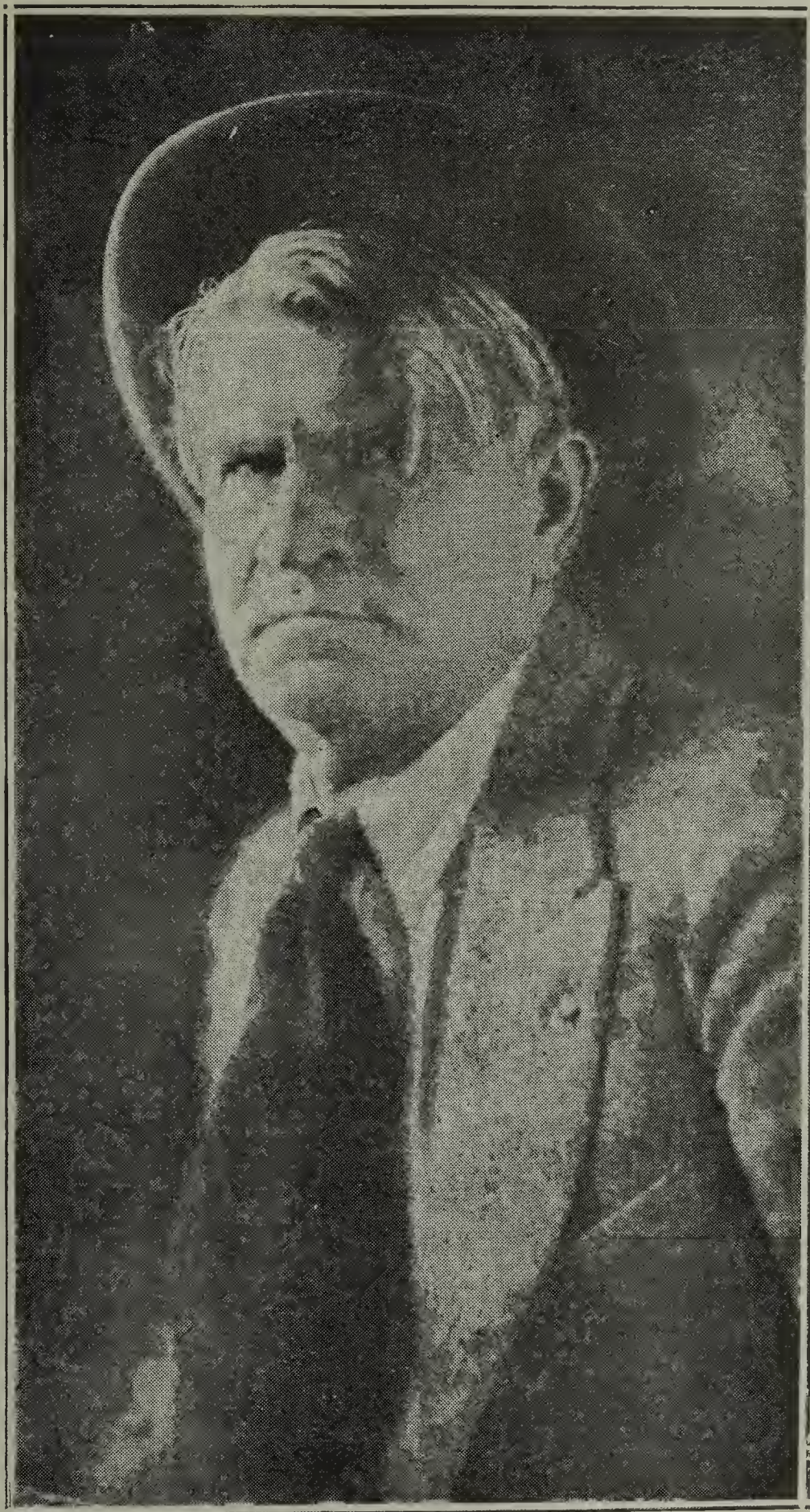




CHARLES M. RUSSELL

Will go down in history as the greatest painter
of early western life.

Illustrator of "Back-Trailing on the Old Frontiers"



CHARLES M. RUSSELL, who will illustrate the series of fifty-two historic incidents included in **BACK-TRAILING ON THE OLD FRONTIERS**, is without doubt the most striking figure today in the field of American Art. His reputation as a painter of action in the portrayal of Indian life and other western subjects of past days is international. No American artist of recent years captured popular favor in England as has Russell. Among many well known Englishmen who own Russell's canvases are the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Connaught, both of whom know the artist personally and greatly admire his work. His exhibit in London just before the war was the most successful of his career, although so much in demand are his paintings that in recent years he has found it difficult to keep on hand a sufficient number of canvases for his annual exhibits in New York and the other larger American cities. During the past twelve months two of his paintings have sold for ten thousand dollars each, one of these being purchased by R. H. Collins, former president of the Cadillac Motor Company; and the other by William M. Armstrong, a prominent business man of Los Angeles.

The real value of Russell's work to the nation will probably not be fully understood until the passing years shall have brought a fuller appreciation of the period in our history that he portrays. The "wild west" has been exploited principally in story and under circus canvas for commercial purposes, and it remains for slow time to bring into the proper perspective that picturesque and romantic story of the change from the western wilderness to what men call civilization.

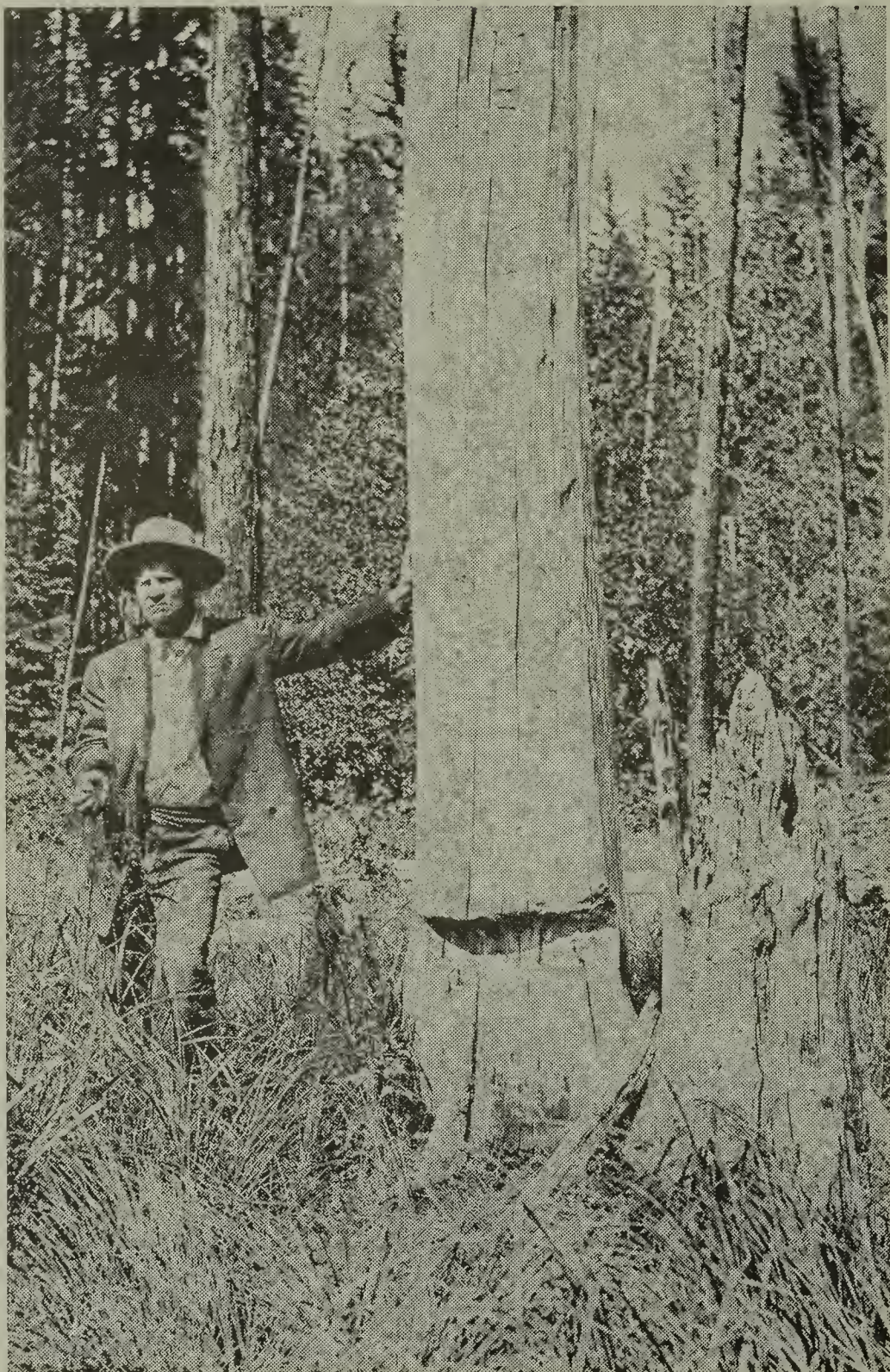
This thought is conveyed in the following tribute which recently came to Russell in a letter from Irvin S. Cobb:

"I'd rather meet you than almost any man in this country. I want to tell you what is the truth—that you can do more with camel's whiskers and earthen pigments out of tubes than any other man at present residing on this hemisphere. America owes you a lot for putting down on canvas the life of the west that is going so

fast, but I reckon she'll do most of the paying after you're dead in the orthodox way. What especially reminded me that I had meant to write was seeing two of your pictures, Kit Carson's Men and The Price of His Robe, in Gump's gallery in San Francisco yesterday. They had to run me out of the place so the janitor could close up."

William Allen White, after visiting Russell in Great Falls, wrote: "What a fine work he is doing. No other man could ever duplicate it."

Russell has many warm admirers in many parts of America who are fortunate enough to have his paintings. Among them are the great moving picture stars, Douglas Fairbanks, Will Rogers, William S. Hart, Tom Mix and many others who are his friends. Fairbanks has three Russell canvases on the walls of his beautiful home at



Russell in the Woods

Beverly Hills. These men, who have studied many phases of the old west, admire Russell's wonderful knowledge of detail of all his subjects and his splendid action.

Russell is the more remarkable because he is entirely a self-taught genius. He never studied in any art school or took a lesson in drawing. Born in St. Louis in 1865, his earliest boyhood

was spent in a frontier atmosphere, as his birthplace was the greatest gathering place in America for men of the plains and mountains. The life-long interest he has had in frontier days he comes by quite naturally, for his immediate forebears were all frontiersmen, and many of them famous in their generations. His great uncle, William Bent, was one of the most noted of the early western fur traders, and built the historic post known as Bent's Fort on the Arkansas river in Colorado in 1824. He was the first white settler in what is today Colorado. His brother, Charles Bent, was appointed first governor of New Mexico by General Kearney and was killed at Santa Fe in an Indian raid. The Bents were originally a

have known them. Then he went down to the cattle ranges and spent several years as a horse-wrangler on roundups, living in the winter on cattle ranches. For some time he lived among the Blood and Northern Piegan Indians, learning their customs and their ways of war and peace. He became a fluent sign talker in that universal, silent language of all western Indian tribes.

From his earliest youth Russell drew and modeled animals, and quite naturally he began while still in his 'teens to paint pictures of the life of the frontier he saw about him on all sides. Possessed of a most remarkable power of observation and a memory that few men are gifted with, he has always retained in the storehouse of his mind



Mrs. Russell, from a Snapshot taken near their summer home on Lake McDonald.

New England family. Silas Bent settled in St. Louis in 1804 and served as first judge of the superior court there.

As a boy, Russell longed to go to the enchanted plains and mountains he had always dreamed of, and by the time he was fourteen years old he had run away so often that his father, Charles S. Russell, who was a wealthy manufacturer of fire-brick, decided to let his son follow his inclinations. So in the spring of 1880 the youngster reached the Judith Basin in Montana—then one of the greatest game regions on the continent. Russell lived for four years with an old fur trapper in the mountains and learned wild animals as few men

all things that he saw of mountain men, cow-punchers, Indians, buffalo, horsethieves and the many types and phases of early-day western life. His pictures are always historically accurate to the slightest detail. His greatest admirers and most capable critics are the old timers who, themselves, saw the life that he paints. None of them has ever pointed to a flaw in any detail of his pictured life of the old days.

In the middle 90's Russell was beginning to receive some recognition as an artist, and it was then his life romance developed. Taken ill at a cattle ranch, Russell was nursed back to health by a charming Kentucky girl of 17. It was a

case of Cupid playing the role of the doctor, for when Russell recovered his health, he had lost his heart. The pretty nurse, too, had fallen in love with the young artist. Shortly after Naney Cooper became Mrs. Russell.

Like most artists, Russell is careless in busi-

ness matters and needed a manager. His capable young wife at once assumed that role. It has been her influence over him that has made him a painter of world fame. It has been her business sagacity that has built the comfortable fortune that the artist and his wife enjoy today.

Russell as a Cowpuncher



This photograph of Russell was taken in 1884, when he was beginning his life on the cattle ranges of Montana. He bought Monte, the pony he is riding in the picture, from the Blackfeet Indians in 1880, the year he came west. He used

this animal for riding and packing for twenty-five years. Monte was Russell's favorite horse. His last years were spent in a pleasant pasture near Great Falls, in which city the artist lives the greater part of the year.

The Cheely-Raban Syndicate

Great Falls, Montana